

working with State and local authorities to help people recover as quickly as possible.

Thank you all for what you're doing; God bless your work. Good luck to you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:20 a.m. at Tinker Air Force Base. In his remarks, he referred to Karen Stark, founder, HUGS Project; Dan Rooney, founder, Folds of Honor Foundation; Capt. Joe Castleberry, Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office; and Gov. Rick Perry of Texas.

### **Remarks Following a Discussion on Health Savings Accounts and an Exchange With Reporters in Oklahoma City**

*September 12, 2008*

**The President.** I want to thank our participants for joining me here in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. I want to thank the mayor, Members of Congress, United States Senator. Most importantly, I want to thank women entrepreneurs. Seventy percent of all new jobs in America are created by small-business owners. Today with us are small-business owners, people who've taken risk in order to realize dream, and in so doing have provided job opportunities. These are the job creators of the vibrant economy here in Oklahoma.

One of the real issues—there's a couple of issues that face, obviously, a small-business owner. One, are they—do they have a product anybody wants to buy? But also taxes—high taxes make it harder to stay in business. I strongly urge the Congress to make the tax relief we passed permanent so that taxes won't increase on small businesses.

But another issue that I hear all the time when I'm talking to small-business owners is the issue of health care costs. If you listen to anybody who owns a small business, they will tell you that the rising cost of health care is troubling not only to their balance sheet but to their soul, because they want their employees to have the best. A small-business owner really does care a lot about their employees.

Today we're talking about a way for small businesses and individuals—and large businesses, for that matter—to help—to deal with rising health care costs. Our goal is to

make sure health care is available and affordable. And once—one way to help deal with rising health care costs is what's called health savings accounts. These are ingenious products to help people save, incent people to, you know, take care of their bodies, and also make sure that if there's a catastrophic illness, they're taken care of. These are products that enable somebody to, you know, move from one job to the next and keep their health care with them, which is important in the 21st century. They're ways for employees to take care of their employees.

In Oklahoma, a lot of people don't know about health saving accounts, and one of the reason I've come down to this part of the country is because I do want people to understand they're available and they're good. About 6 million people across the country are using health savings accounts. The biggest increase is with small-business owners.

And so, today we've had a good discussion with owners who've got a health savings account, people who are looking at health savings account. I introduced Sandy, head of the SBA here, to folks and if somebody wants to really learn about an HSA, just go on [hsa.gov](http://hsa.gov), which is an SBA site, so people can see whether or not it makes sense for your business or your family.

Anyway, I do want to thank you all very much for, one, being pioneers; two, being risk takers; and three, giving me a chance to hear your thoughts and concerns and—about a very innovative way for small businesses and individuals to be able to better afford health care.

Thank you, all.

Guy was trying to ask a question, but he was in violation of the no question policy. [Laughter] Right, Deb [Deb Reichmann, Associated Press]?

### **Republican Vice Presidential Nominee Sarah Palin**

**Q.** Did you watch the Palin interview?

**The President.** As I said, no question policy. [Laughter] She did just fine.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:33 a.m. at the Presbyterian Health Foundation Conference Center. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Mick Cornett of Oklahoma City, OK; Sen. Tom Coburn

of Oklahoma; and Sandy K. Baruah, Acting Administrator, Small Business Administration. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

**Proclamation 8287—National Hispanic Heritage Month, 2008**

*September 12, 2008*

*By the President of the United States of America*

**A Proclamation**

During National Hispanic Heritage Month, we recognize the many Americans of Hispanic descent who have made outstanding contributions to our Nation.

The rich cultural traditions of the Hispanic-American community have made a remarkable impact on American society. The diverse backgrounds of Hispanic Americans and their dedication to family have become an integral part of America. With a deep commitment to faith and a strong desire to live the American dream, these citizens are realizing the full blessings of liberty. Educational opportunities are helping a new generation work toward success, and many Hispanic Americans operate thriving small businesses.

We also honor Hispanic Americans for their strong tradition of service in the Armed Forces. These proud patriots have fought in every war since our founding, and many have earned the Medal of Honor for their courage. Hispanic service men and women have shown their love for the United States by answering the call to serve, and we owe them and their families a tremendous debt of gratitude. Their patriotism and valor have added to the character of our Nation.

National Hispanic Heritage Month is an opportunity to celebrate the spirit and accomplishments of Hispanic Americans everywhere. To honor those achievements, the Congress, by Public Law 100–402, as amended, has authorized and requested the President to issue annually a proclamation designating September 15 through October 15 as “National Hispanic Heritage Month.”

**Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush,** President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by

the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim September 15 through October 15, 2008, as National Hispanic Heritage Month. I call upon public officials, educators, librarians, and all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this twelfth day of September, in the year of our Lord two thousand eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-third.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., September 16, 2008]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on September 17. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this proclamation.

**Proclamation 8288—National Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Week, 2008**

*September 12, 2008*

*By the President of the United States of America*

**A Proclamation**

Throughout history, America has counted on brave individuals willing to put on the uniform to protect our land and defend our way of life. This week we honor and recognize the many contributions members of our National Guard and Reserve make to our Nation, and we thank the civilian employers who support these individuals as they answer the call of duty.

The men and women of the National Guard and Reserve have demonstrated the highest form of citizenship, and their service is vital to the security of our country and the peace of the world. As the early patriots who claimed our Nation’s liberty did, today’s Guard and Reserve are fighting a new and unprecedented war and pledging their lives and honor to defend our freedom. As many of those early patriots did, members of today’s Guard and Reserve lead civilian lives but stand ready to wear our Nation’s uniform